Seniors' News

Seniors' Secretariat

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice Volume 113 October 2005

Executive Director's Message: A Busy Fall

By Valerie White

The Seniors' Secretariat continues to celebrate its 25th anniversary with a host of fall activites. We are looking forward to the November launch of the Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia. I truly believe it will make a tremendous difference in the lives of Nova Scotia's seniors for generations to come.

We are also one of the organizing sponsors for the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) conference. This national event will take place in Halifax from October 20–22. The conference will feature the latest research in gerontology and will bring together the best and brightest in the field of aging.

On November 2, the first annual Elder Abuse Awareness Day will take place at the Holiday Inn in Dartmouth. Elder abuse is any action or inaction that threatens the health or well-being of a senior. It is not often talked about, but often occurs. We hope that by creating awareness those being abused will be able to recognize the signs and seek help.

We continue our dialogue with seniors through monthly consultations with the Group of IX and larger consultations each spring and fall with seniors' councils, centres and other organizations involved with seniors. This year, our fall consultation was held on October 11.

Valerie White, Executive Director, poses with two of our volunteers from Vimy branch No. 27, left - Henry Kelly and right - Jerry MacDonald, at the 50+ Expo. Minister Angus MacIsaac earlier presented our veterans with special recognition certificates.

Finally, we are happy to announce that the Department of Health is partnering with the Seniors Oral Health Collaboration to identify the unmet oral health needs of seniors and develop ways to ensure those needs are met. We are enthusiastic about the oral health initiative. Good oral health can improve the overall health and well-being of seniors.

As the 25th anniversary of the Seniors' Secretariat enters its final months, we hope you are pleased with our progress as a Secretariat. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions on these or any other Secretariat initiatives.

Valerie

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Seniors' News

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice

The Secretariat Newsletter is published four times a year by the Seniors' Secretariat and distributed free of charge. We welcome letters, articles, and items of interest from you. Please include your name, address, and telephone number on all correspondence.

The Seniors' Secretariat was established in 1980 to facilitate the planning and development of services and programs for seniors by coordinating plans, policies, and programs presented by the departments of the provincial government. The Secretariat serves as a one-door entry to government for seniors, seniors' groups, and other provincial bodies concerned with aging issues. The Secretariat develops plans, policies, and programs in partnership with other levels of government and agencies responsible for seniors.

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Seniors' Secretariat

NOVA SCOTIA

The Future is in our Hands We all Own the Strategy for Positive Aging

By Nancy Radcliffe, Task Force on Aging

"The future is literally in our hands to mold as we like. But we cannot wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow is now."

Eleanor Roosevelt's words are important to remember as we prepare for an aging population. The *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* will serve as a guide for molding our province's future and for taking actions that cannot wait until tomorrow. The official launch of the Strategy will be held in November 2005.

In our hands

Over the past year, all levels of government, organizations, and individuals have worked with the Task Force on Aging to develop the Strategy. In fact, more than 1,000 people - most of them seniors - shared their insights and ideas through written responses to the *Discussion Paper for Positive Aging*, and by participating in 34 public meetings and 12 stakeholder forums. Their dedication to making sure Nova Scotia values and supports seniors is reflected in the Strategy.

The Strategy is more than a framework for government action—it is a guide for helping every sector of society be better prepared for the impact of an aging population. Likewise, the success of the Strategy will depend on the ability of all sectors to work together - constructively and creatively. Henry Ford once said: "If I had asked the people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." The Task Force on Aging asked Nova Scotians what they wanted. Admittedly, some of them suggested the equivalent of "faster horses." But a great many more said we need new and better ways of doing things, because increasing demands will make many of our current programs unsustainable. Solutions to meeting the needs of seniors today and in the future are not found in convenient thinking, they are found in our collective creativity.

Molding the future

Each month, 700 Nova Scotians celebrate their 65th birthday. Based on the percentage of the population over 65, Nova Scotia is currently the oldest province in Atlantic Canada and is the third-oldest in the country. Nova Scotia's population of seniors (132,600) is expected to nearly double by 2026. In fact, the population in six Nova Scotia towns is already more than 25 per cent seniors. The reality of an aging population brings many challenges, but it also brings tremendous opportunities. Maximizing these opportunities is the best way to overcome the challenges.

The Strategy identifies a vision of Nova Scotia as "an inclusive society of caring communities that supports the well being of seniors and values their contributions." It defines nine targeted goals that are needed to achieve this vision. And it describes the societal actions that are needed to achieve each of the goals. The Strategy will also provide background and research to help everyone understand the broader impact of future decisions. And it will highlight some innovative ideas that have been successfully implemented here and in other parts of the world.

Tomorrow is now

At the heart of the Strategy is the belief that the actions we take today must, wherever possible, help us prepare for tomorrow. At every opportunity, in every planning activity we undertake, Nova Scotians need to think about what needs to be done to make sure our communities are ready to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing senior population. Some changes are large, others are small. In some cases we face the significant challenge of shifting attitudes, in others it's simply a matter of making minor adjustments. Indeed, by encouraging Nova Scotians to talk about our aging population, the Task

Force has already witnessed the ripple effect that increased awareness is having on planning and policies that impact seniors. Like a tiny pebble on a smooth pond, we have seen how sharing good ideas and developing senior-friendly practices improves lives.

The Strategy recommends that everyone—governments at all levels, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, community and faith groups, and individuals—think about what they can do to make aging in Nova Scotia a more positive experience. As we launch the Strategy, it is important to be excited about how far we have come, but also to remember that the this is only the beginning. The next step is to develop detailed action plans. Again, all sectors— not just government—are urged to use the Strategy as a guide for planning. The responsibility for implementing the actions rests with a variety of different groups and individuals. In some cases, the responsibility rests with all of us. Just as the Strategy belongs to Nova Scotians, so does its implementation.

A copy of the Strategy will be mailed to the people who attended public and stakeholder meetings. For anyone who was unable to attend, but would like to receive a copy, please call **1-800-670-0065** (toll free) or **424-0065** in Metro.

Update on Seniors for Literacy Project

By Marguerite McMillan, Project Coordinator, Nova Scotia Seniors for Literacy Committee

In our last newsletter, I reported on the literacy workshops that were held for seniors in three communities last Fall. Following that report, I was invited to do a presentation about the workshops at a *Tutor Learner Conference* in Digby this past May. Some thirty tutors from that part of the province attended the session and learned ways to remove barriers faced by older learners and how to attract them to literacy programs. They were also introduced to the new literacy resources kit for seniors and viewed "Never too Old to Learn", a video prepared by the University of Regina. The feedback from tutors was positive and many said they were not aware that so many seniors struggle to read.

The struggle to read affects everything from being able to read the mail, completing forms and cheques, reading food and medication labels, to finding information on staying healthy. The term Health Literacy has been getting a lot of attention lately, and studies are showing that lack of literacy skills is often associated with poor health among seniors and the inability to manage their health. The term Health Literacy is defined by Healthy People 2010 as "the degree to which people are able to get, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions". With this in mind, the committee applied for funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, a program of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to develop a health literacy manual specifically designed for older adults. We are pleased to report that the funding was approved for the project to begin this Fall. The goal is to have the manual available for use in our province, but it will be designed so that it can be adapted to other jurisdictions.

Seniors' Literacy and Learning Initiative

The other good news is that we have just learned that the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the Seniors' Secretariat are partnering in a joint investment for seniors' literacy and learning programs.

The Seniors' Secretariat and Department of Education each invested $20,000 to help build literacy and learning programs for seniors in communities across the province. Through the Seniors' Literacy and Learning Initiative, Community Learning Networks can apply for grants of up to $3,000 to implement senior-friendly literacy programs in their community.

For more information on the Seniors' Literacy and Learning Initiative or the Seniors for Literacy Project, please feel free to contact me at the Secretariat by phone at **424-5329** or **1-800-670-0065**, or via e-mail at **mcmillma@gov.ns.ca**.

The Honourable Angus McIsaac, Chair of the Seniors' Secretariat, jointly announced a $40,000 investment to support literacy and learning for seniors with the Department of Education at the fall consultation, held on October 11. He is seen here with Carol Boudreau, facilitator of the Kings County project, looking over the book her group created.

Elder Abuse

By Barb Baker, Elder Abuse Consultant

Towards Awareness and Prevention of Elder Abuse

Has your neighbour mentioned that her nephew only visits when her pension cheques come?

Does the explanation about your father's bruises given to you by the nursing home care attendant sound suspicious? Has your mother stopped talking with you as frequently since she moved in with her new partner? These situations may indicate elder abuse. How can you find out? Are there services available in your community to assist? What can you do?

Understanding and recognizing the signs of abuse when you suspect an older adult is being treated improperly can provide you with the confidence and ability to be able to help prevent and stop the abuse from happening. The Seniors' Secretariat is committed to addressing the issue of elder abuse and has been leading the implementation of the Government of Nova Scotia's five–year elder abuse strategy. With guidance from the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy Committee and its two working groups, priorities for action have been identified. The strategy emphasizes the importance of education and raising awareness in battling elder abuse and encouraging people to speak up about it.

In November 2005, the *NS Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention* will be shared with stakeholders across the province, identifying priorities and establishing the framework within which efforts to prevent the abuse of older Nova Scotians will occur over the next several years. *Initial Actions* and *Future Actions* will guide government, community partners, communities, and individuals in promoting the health and well-being of older Nova Scotians through the prevention of abuse.

The Secretariat is also busy exploring the role of community-based networks in the prevention of elder abuse; developing information on elder abuse for the Secretariat's website (as well as other informational materials); and planning an *Elder Abuse Awareness Day* to be held on November 2.

To learn more about the work the Secretariat is doing related to elder abuse or to share information or a story, please contact Jane Cowie, Elder Abuse Consultant, at phone: **(902) 424-5461**, e-mail: cowieje@gov.ns.ca or Barb Baker, Elder Abuse Consultant, at phone: **(902) 229-435**, e-mail: bakerbr@gov.ns.ca. You can also call the Secretariat toll-free at **1-800-670-0065**.

If you suspect a senior is being abused, don't ignore the signs. Discuss the situation with the individual and suggest counselling, resources, and support services. Get outside help, if needed, from social services, legal services, or police. If the situation is an emergency, call 911.

If you know of a senior in need of protection, call Adult Protection Services, Nova Scotia Department of Health at **1-800-225-7225**.

YOUR HEALTH

Flu Season Cometh Be Prepared

Influenza is caused by influenza A and B viruses and occurs in Canada every year, usually during the late fall and winter months. The usual symptoms of influenza are sudden onset of fever, chills, cough, sore throat, sore muscles and joints, headache and tiredness. Influenza can cause severe illness and even death, especially in people over age 65 and those with chronic illness. Every year in Nova Scotia over 2500 hospitalizations and over 400 deaths are the result of influenza infection.

Influenza vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its complications. Since influenza viruses change themselves from year to year vaccination needs to be repeated every fall. In Nova Scotia the vaccine is available at no cost to people considered to be at higher risk of getting severely ill from influenza. Those at 'high-risk' include:

- people 65 years of age or over
- people who live in nursing homes and other chronic care facilities.
- adults and children with chronic lung or heart diseases, diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, HIV, immune deficiency, anemia
- children and adolescents treated for long periods of time with aspirin
- house hold contacts of the above groups
- children age 6 to 23 months of age
- health care workers (including volunteers in hospitals, long term care facilities and home care organizations)

The only people who should not receive influenza vaccine are people who have severe or anaphylactic allergies to eggs or who have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine.

Every fall, starting in mid-October, influenza vaccine is available at family doctor's offices and community clinics. Watch your local newspaper and listen to your local radio and TV for the provincial "Flu Launch" date and the times and locations of local clinics. Although October and November are the best months to get influenza vaccine, if you miss these times it is still important to be immunized during the early winter before the influenza season arrives.

It is also important to remember that if you are in one of the "high-risk" groups there should be no cost at all for you to get influenza vaccine at your doctor's office or Public Health clinic.

Along with having "high-risk" people immunized, prevention of influenza in "high-risk" people also requires steps to reduce their exposure to influenza viruses. The main way to reduce the exposure of high-risk individuals is to immunize their close contacts—household members and care givers. If household members and care providers are not immunized against influenza then they are putting "high-risk" people at increased risk of influenza and its complications. Take the initiative and ask household members, as well those who provide care to you (whether it is in your home, at an office or in a facility) "have you had your flu shot?"

If you are a care-provider or volunteer to "high-risk" people in their own homes or in a care facility it is your responsibility to be immunized to protect them.

Don't take the risk of bringing the "flu bug" to those you are trying to help.

There are many myths about influenza vaccine but in reality it is a very safe and well-tolerated vaccine.

Can influenza vaccine give people influenza?

No, the manufacturing process kills the virus particles in flu vaccine, so the vaccine cannot cause an influenza infection.

I got influenza vaccine last year and still got influenza symptoms. How?

Possible explanations for getting influenza-like illness despite being vaccinated are:

1. Many other viruses give people flu-like symptoms. Influenza vaccine does not prevent these other illnesses; it only protects you against true influenza. The influenza-like symptoms are probably due to infection by another virus.
2. The vaccine did not give full protection and the person got true influenza. This will happen to a few people, but without vaccination the illness would probably be much more severe.

Is it true that the side effects of influenza vaccine are worse than the flu?

No. The benefits of influenza vaccine far outweigh any risks, especially for people at high risk of getting severe influenza and its complications. Most people experience few or no side effects. After a flu shot, some patients may be more likely to blame the symptoms of another illness on the vaccine. Taking acetaminophen shortly after your flu shot may decrease the frequency of side effects such as redness, pain and swelling at the injection site.

If you do experience the rare flu-like side-effects, they will usually disappear in 24-48 hours, while the flu can last for 10 days or more and may leave you feeling unwell even longer. Also, a true case of influenza always leaves the possibility of complications, such as pneumonia, and even death.

If you are 65 years of age or older, or in one of the other "high-risk" categories, then the best way to protect yourself from influenza is to have yourself, and your close contacts [household members and care givers], immunized every fall.

The following general steps will help you avoid influenza and the many other viruses that are around every fall and winter.

- Wash your hands frequently with hot water and soap
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing and sneezing
- Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly and get enough sleep. This helps your body to fight off infections

Reprinted with permission from: Dr. Robert Strang, Medical Officer of Health for the Capital Health District

DIN, NPN, DIN-HM: What They Mean and Why It Matters

If you look closely at a bottle of vitamins, you should see an eight digit numerical code preceded by one of the following three abbreviations: "DIN", "NPN" or "DIN-HM". The eight digit numerical code is assigned by Health Canada when the product is approved for sale in Canada. The abbreviation that precedes the number indicates the type of product:

"**DIN**" stands for *drug identification number.* Products with "DIN" on their label are drugs that have been approved to be marketed in accordance with the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations.*

"**NPN**" stands for *natural product number.* Products with "NPN" on their label are natural health products that have been approved to be marketed under the *Natural Health Products Regulations.*

"DIN-HM" stands for *homeopathic medicine*. Products with "DIN-HM" on their label are homeopathic medicines that have been approved to be marketed under the *Natural Health Products Regulations*.

The importance of looking for this abbreviation with the eight digit numerical code is because it lets you know that the product has been reviewed by Health Canada for safety, quality and health claims. On small containers, the abbreviation and number may be so small that you will have to ask your pharmacist to point it out!

While it is always good to look for this abbreviation and number when you are selecting a nonprescription health product, don't expect to find it on all health-related products. Some products, like blood glucose test strips and bandages, are not drugs, natural health products or homeopathic medicines. They are health-related supplies and they go though a different approval process in Canada.

Reprinted with permission from: Dawn Frail, Manager of Drug Technology Assessment, Department of Health

Pharmacare Reimbursement

Health Minister Angus MacIsaac announced on October 5 that Nova Scotia seniors who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement and have paid a Pharmacare premium will be fully reimbursed.

"The agreement has just been signed with Medavie Blue Cross to start processing back payments for eligible Nova Scotians," said Mr. MacIsaac.

Premiums were introduced in the provincial Pharmacare Program in 1996. The full 2005–06 premium is $390 per year. The premium is either reduced or waived for about half of the 95,000 seniors enrolled in the program.

The premium is not the same as the co-payment. All program participants, regardless of the premium they pay, still pay a co-payment amount. The co-payment is 33 per cent, to a maximum of $30 per prescription, capped at $350 annually.

Since the spring, eligible Nova Scotians who have come forward have been reimbursed for premiums paid in the current and last fiscal years. The policy has now been changed to allow for reimbursements for payments made since 1996.

Cheques will begin to be mailed through the Pharmacare Program within three to four weeks to individuals who have already come forward.

The province will begin an information campaign in the coming weeks to notify pharmacists, health-care providers, seniors, and their family members. As well, revised literature, which highlights this benefit more clearly, is now being used by the Pharmacare Program.

Those with questions about their situation should contact the seniors Pharmacare Program. It is important that individuals only call if they receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement and have paid a Pharmacare premium in the past. This does not include the co-payment.

Seniors in Halifax can call **429-6565**. The toll-free number throughout Nova Scotia is ***1-800-544-6191***.

Knowledge is the Best Medicine

One of the objectives of the Seniors' Secretariat is to improve the health and quality of the lives of seniors living in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Medication Awareness Committee — a committee that was established by the Secretariat —has developed a number of projects to encourage the appropriate use of medications. The first of these projects is the *Knowledge is the best medicine* brochure.

This brochure provides helpful hints to improve your knowledge about the medications you take. It identifies information you should seek from doctors, pharmacists and nurses. It will help you understand what you can do to maintain and improve your health.

A *Medication Record booklet* is also included for you to record important personal medical information. You can list all of your medicines, what they are for, and when they should be taken.

The *Knowledge is the best medicine* brochure is also available en français. Complimentary copies can be obtained from your pharmacist or by calling the Rx&D order desk toll free at **1-800-363-0203**.

If you have questions about this program or other programs and services for seniors, call the Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat at **1-800-670-0065**.

Remember, your Medication Record booklet is only useful if it is up-to-date and if it is used properly.

Help for Depression

The Department of Health is reaching out to seniors who may be suffering from depression.

It is estimated nine per cent of all Nova Scotians report being depressed at some point but many of those people won't seek help.

As part of the a three-year campaign to increase awareness of mental illness, the government is trying to raise awareness through a campaign that urges people to reach out for help if they are at risk for depression.

"We know that, among seniors, retirement, the loss of a spouse, or medical problems can cause people to become depressed. It's important they discuss this with their doctor so they can start feeling well again," said Linda Judge, senior co-ordinator of mental health with the Department of Health.

Many people live with the symptoms for years without even knowing it. Some of the common signs are:

- Irritability and/or depressed mood nearly every day for weeks or months
- Loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Low energy
- Poor concentration
- Feeling sad or anxious
- Feel that life is hopeless or empty
- Have chest pains or stomach problems

Posters will soon go out to all nursing homes, home support agencies and senior community centres. A brochure outlining the symptoms, how you get help and some of the contributing factors that cause depression will be widely distributed.

For more information about the campaign call: **(902) 424-7235**.

NUTRITION

Almond Joy

A handful of almonds provides half of the recommended daily amount of vitamin E (15 milligrams). An important antioxidant that protects cells from everyday damage, vitamin E helps the immune system and may reduce the risk of cataracts. Spinach and other dark green leafy vegetables, wheat germ, vegetable oils, and seeds are also good sources of vitamin E.

Source: American Dietetic Association

POSITIVE LIVING

"'Why not' is a slogan for an interesting life."

— Mason Cooley, writer

"If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito."

— Anita Roddick

Do You Stop and Smell the Roses?

How do you respond when you are behind a driver who hasn't noticed that the light has turned green?

A. Give the person a moment to notice the light has changed.

B. Blow your horn immediately.

C. Blow your horn and express your irritation verbally.

What are you most likely to do in a slow-moving grocery line?

A. Engage in a conversation with someone else.

B. Check down the line to see how fast things are moving.

C. Become irritated.

In talking with others, how often do you interrupt them in mid-sentence?

A. Not very often.

B. Some of the time.

C. Very often.

How much time during the day do you devote to prayer, pondering, meditation, and/or just taking it easy?

A. At least an hour.

B. At least 30 minutes.

C. Less than 30 minutes.

Which word best describes your feeling at the end of most days?

A. Contented.

B. Fatigued.

C. Stressed.

When you see a rainbow, how long does it hold your attention?

A. Many minutes.

B. Several seconds.

C. Just a second.

How often do you feel joy in what you're doing?

A. Frequently.

B. Often enough.

C. Are you kidding?

How often do you hurry when there is no reason to?

A. Never.

B. Sometimes.

C. I have rushed through this test.

SCORING: If you answered (A) most of the time, chances are you are savoring life. If you answered (B) or (C) most of the time, look back at some of the (A) answers and begin practicing at least one or two of them.

Reprinted with permission from: Kirk Jones, PhD, author of Addicted to Hurry: Spiritual Strategies for Slowing Down

Fraud: Don't be a Victim

Fraud is intentional deception meant to financially harm another person. Fraud includes scamming a person of money, property, or other assets. Becoming a victim of fraud is not dependent on your age, race, income or location. Scam artists take advantage of thousands of Canadians each year who are educated, informed, and involved in the community. Their techniques are up-to-date and include telemarketing, door-to-door canvassing, door-to-door salespeople, and online offers. A scammer could be a stranger, but can also be someone you are close to.

While most scammers are highly informed and regularly update their scamming methods, there are some tips you can follow to avoid being taken advantage of by a scammer:

- Never agree to send someone money so that you can win a prize.
- Be careful about paying for products you have not seen.
- Don't pay someone up front to recover money for you.
- Don't give in to pressure from a salesperson. If the deal is legitimate, they will wait.
- Ask for all offers in writing as well as a call back number, and references.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and make sure your questions are answered. If you don't understand the offer, do not buy anything.
- Before making major financial decisions such as making investments, loaning money, or changing the ownership of your assets, get a second opinion from your spouse, a trusted friend, a lawyer or your financial advisor.
- Don't give personal information about credit cards or bank accounts unless you initiate the call.
- Take notes of every contact you have with a salesperson—include date and time.
- Always take the time to read the fine print.

For more information, visit the P.A.C.T. website at http://www.pactns.ca or the Nova Scotia Securities Commission website at http://www.gov.ns.ca/nssc or call the Nova Scotia Securities Commission at **(902) 424-7768**.

Source: These tips have been adapted from brochures printed by Prevention & Awareness of Crime & Theft (P.A.C.T.) and Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA).

Preparing for an Emergency

As hurricane season is upon us and winter is fast approaching, it is important to take steps to ensure that you are as prepared as possible for a weather emergency. Hurricane Juan and White Juan demonstrated that Nova Scotians must be prepared for emergencies that arise from abnormal weather patterns.

Suggestions to help you prepare for an emergency:

1. Find out what types of storms normally hit your area.
2. Pay attention to storm warnings.
3. Plan for what you will do if the power goes out, if there is no water, or if you have to evacuate your home.
4. Arrange with a friend or neighbour to check on you and help you if needed.
5. Develop a survival kit including non-perishable foods, bottled water, candles and waterproof matches. When preparing your kit, keep in mind any special needs of pets.

6. Have a battery-operated radio so you can listen for updates as to what is going on.
7. If your TTY plugs in, have another way to get information, such as text messaging. (TTYs are communication devices used by the hearing impaired)
8. If you need power for medical reasons, such as a ventilator or medication that needs to be refrigerated, register with Nova Scotia Power's critical consumer list. Registering can help make restoring power to your home a priority. **For information** on how to register, call Nova Scotia Power at 428-6230; outside metro call **1-800-428-6230**; TTY users call **1-800-565-6051**.
9. Know where your medications are so you can grab them quickly if needed.
10. Have an out-of-area contact to notify friends and family of your well being.

While these tips can help ensure you are well-prepared for an emergency, you can never be completely prepared for the unexpected. If you need immediate assistance during an emergency, call 911.

Source: http://www.gov.ns.ca/disa

Eight Things You Can Do to Get a Good Night's Rest

1. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
2. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol for at least six to eight hours before going to bed. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and can cause nightmares. Alcohol may have a sedating effect, but it actually disrupts sleep.
3. Don't eat or drink too much of anything close to bedtime.
4. Pick the right time to exercise. A brisk workout within three hours of going to bed makes it harder to fall asleep. Our body temperatures rise during exercise, and it may take up to six hours to drop. Lower body temperature signals the brain that it's time to sleep. Many sleep experts recommend late afternoon as the perfect time to exercise.
5. If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed and listen to soft music or read until you feel sleepy. Don't use this as time to solve problems.
6. Use your bed for sleeping. Take everything else (worrying, planning, office work) somewhere else. The sleep environment should signal nothing but sleep.
7. Make sure your bedroom is cool, dark, quiet, and as free from interruptions as possible. Earplugs, eye shades, and "white noise" machines can contribute to a better sleep environment.
8. A relaxing ritual just before bedtime, like a hot bath or a cup of warm milk, will also give your body the signal that it's time for sleep.

Reprinted with permission from: National Sleep Foundation

NOTES OF INTEREST

Online Consultation for Seniors

Seniors are invited to participate in Social Development Canada's (SDC) online consultation at http://www.sdc.gc.ca. Through the seniors' consultation, SDC hopes to learn more about the experiences of Canadians who are retired and those who are looking ahead to retirement years.

You can participate in the online consultation in two ways:

1. Share your stories and ideas on the challenges faced be seniors and those planning their retirement, as well as what you think could be done to better support them.

2. Complete the "Canadian Seniors: Today and Tomorrow" workbook that explores some of the challenges faced by seniors and those planning for retirement, and then share what you believe should be the most important priorities for action.

For more information on SDC or if you have questions about the consultation, call **1-800-622-6232** (1-800-O Canada). If you use a TTY, call **1-800-465-7735**.

Quotable Quotes

"When you become dissatisfied with life and want to return to your youth — think of algebra!"

— Unknown

"The chief ingredient of fad diets is baloney."

— Neil Stone, MD

"Better to be silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt."

— Abraham Lincoln

"If I've learned anything in my 70 years it's that nothing's as good or bad as it appears."

— Bushrod H. Campbell

Preventing Falls Together

There are now Preventing Falls Together coalitions in Digby Neck, Bear River First Nations, and Waycobah First Nations. This brings the total number of coalitions in Nova Scotia to 12. The new groups were formed this summer and members are enthusiastic about making their communities safer for seniors. A new website has been developed to better serve these and all other Preventing Falls Together coalitions.

Please visit the new website at http://www.nscommunitylinks.ca for more information on Preventing Falls Together and the Community Links organization.

Metro Seniors Food Delivery Society

We would like to inform you of a new non-profit society that was recently created in Metro called the *Metro Seniors Food Delivery Society*. It is partnering with Delicious Deliveries Mobile Catering in Dartmouth and the Metro Housing Authority to provide hot homemade meals to the senior complexes in metro. Meals are $6.00 and $8.00.

More information about the Society can be obtained at **465-3667** or by calling Delicious Deliveries at **465-3663**.

Old Age Security Benefits Increase

(from Social Development Canada Press Release October 1, 2005)

Social Development Canada has announced that the quarterly rate adjustments to the Old Age Security Benefits has resulted in an increase of 0.6 per cent for all programs over the previous quarter. The maximum Old Age Security Pension monthly benefit is now $479.83 and the maximum monthly Guaranteed Income Supplement has risen to $570.27 for a single person. The same seven per cent increase is reflected in the Allowance payments, which provide additional benefits to eligible low-income spouses or common-law partners of pensioners, as well as to eligible survivors.

In addition to the quarterly increase, the GIS, the Allowance and the Allowance for the Survivor will also increase by a total of seven per cent over two years, beginning in January 2006, as was promised in the federal budget in February of this year. This will result in an increase in the GIS of $18.00 a month for single recipients and by $29.00 a month for couples. This will increase by the same amount again in January 2007. By 2007, the increase will add up to approximately $400 a year for a single senior and $700 a year for a couple. This is the first increase to the GIS and the Allowances since 1984 that is not a result of inflation indexing. The quarterly inflation indexing will continue to be added to all of the Old Age Security Benefits.

Old Age Security Payments October - December 2005

The following chart shows the **maximum and average** monthly rates for Old Age Security (OAS), Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Allowance, as well as the maximum annual income to be eligible for these benefits. For detailed monthly rates, please refer to the Tables of Rates for Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Allowance. Old Age Security benefit rates are reviewed in January, April, July and October to reflect increases in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The term "spouse" includes a common-law partner. Pensioners are not eligible for benefits if their income, or the combined income of them and their spouse, is more than the maximum income shown on the chart. The Allowance stops being paid at $25,536 while the GIS stops being paid at $33,168.

Old Age Security Benefit Payment Rates October - December 2005

Type of Benefit	Recipient	Average Monthly Benefit (July 2005)	Maximum Monthly Benefit	Maximum Annual Income
Old Age Security Pension	All recipients	$454.12	$479.83	See note
Guaranteed Income Supplement	Single person	$383.55	$570.27	$13,704
	Spouse of pensioner	$234.63	$371.46	$17,856
	Spouse of non-pensioner	$377.01	$570.27	$33,168
	Spouse of Allowance recipient	$308.36	$371.46	$33,168
Allowance	All recipients	$326.08	$851.29	$25,536
Allowance for the survivor	All recipients	$507.47	$939.84	$18,744

Note - Pensioners with an individual net income above $60,806 must repay part or all of the maximum Old Age Security pension amount. The repayment amounts are normally deducted from their monthly payments before they are issued. The full OAS pension is eliminated when a pensioner's net income is $98,850 or above.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Provincial Alzheimer Conference

The ***16th Provincial Alzheimer Conference*** *Making a Difference: The Story is Changing* will be held October 17 & 18, 2005 at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre, 20 Maillard Street, Sydney, NS.

For further information contact Linda Bird at **422-7961** or **1-800-611-6345**; fax: **902-422-7971**; e-mail:educate@alzheimer.ns.ca

Canadian Association on Gerontology 34th Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting

"We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sail."

– Anonymous

This quote inspired the theme for the Canadian Association on Gerontology's (CAG's) 34th annual scientific and educational meeting, Aging: Navigating the Winds of Change. The conference will be held from October 20–22 in Halifax, NS. The theme was chosen to reflect that there is much being done to ensure the aging process is smooth sailing for a growing number of Canadian seniors.

The conference will feature keynote speakers Dr. Kenneth Rockwood, who will be presenting the latest research on Alzheimer's, and Tony Antonucci, who will discuss comparative social relations across three continents. Other highlights include an original dramatic presentation by the IronDale Ensemble Theatre and over 200 workshops on a number of topics concerning aging.

For more information on the conference call **1-613-599-7060**, e-mail: cagacg@igs.net or visit the CAG website at http://www.cagacg.ca *click on "upcoming conference".*

Elder Abuse Awareness Day

On November 2, 2005 the Secretariat will celebrate the first-ever *Elder Abuse Awareness Day* by hosting a one-day workshop that will bring together a wide range of stakeholders to celebrate successes and explore opportunities for action. Participants will learn about the development of the *NS Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention,* celebrate successes, discuss their role in implementing the strategy, and explore how to work together to prevent and address abuse and neglect of older adults at the community level. Invitations for this event will be sent out in early October.

Falls Prevention Day

The first annual **Falls Prevention Day** will be coming up on November 22.
For more information visit the Community Links website at http://www.nscommunitylinks.ca.

Programs for
Seniors
2005

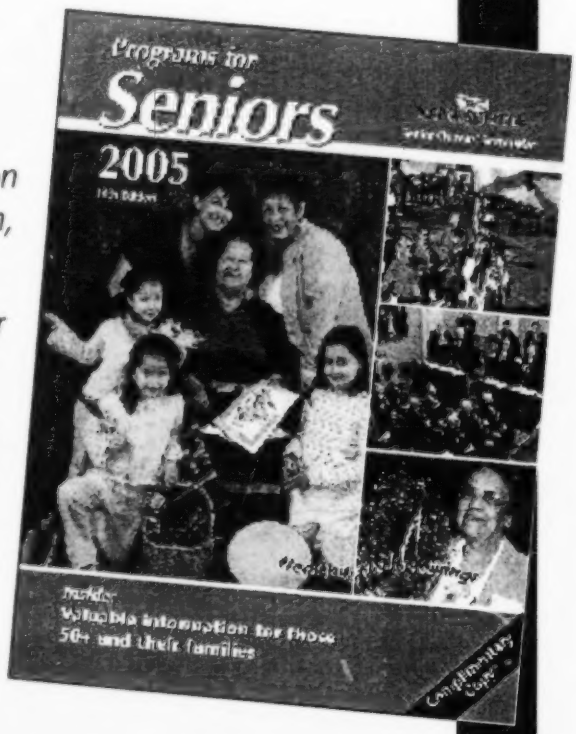
16th Edition

This 136-page directory features information about active living, health care, transportation, housing, finances, legal matters, and more.

Pick up a free copy at your local pharmacy or library.

You may also find it in Sobey's stores, physicians' offices, hospitals, seniors' centres, and clubs.

Multiple copies of Programs for Seniors *can be sent to groups and organizations upon request.*



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Seniors' News
Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice

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